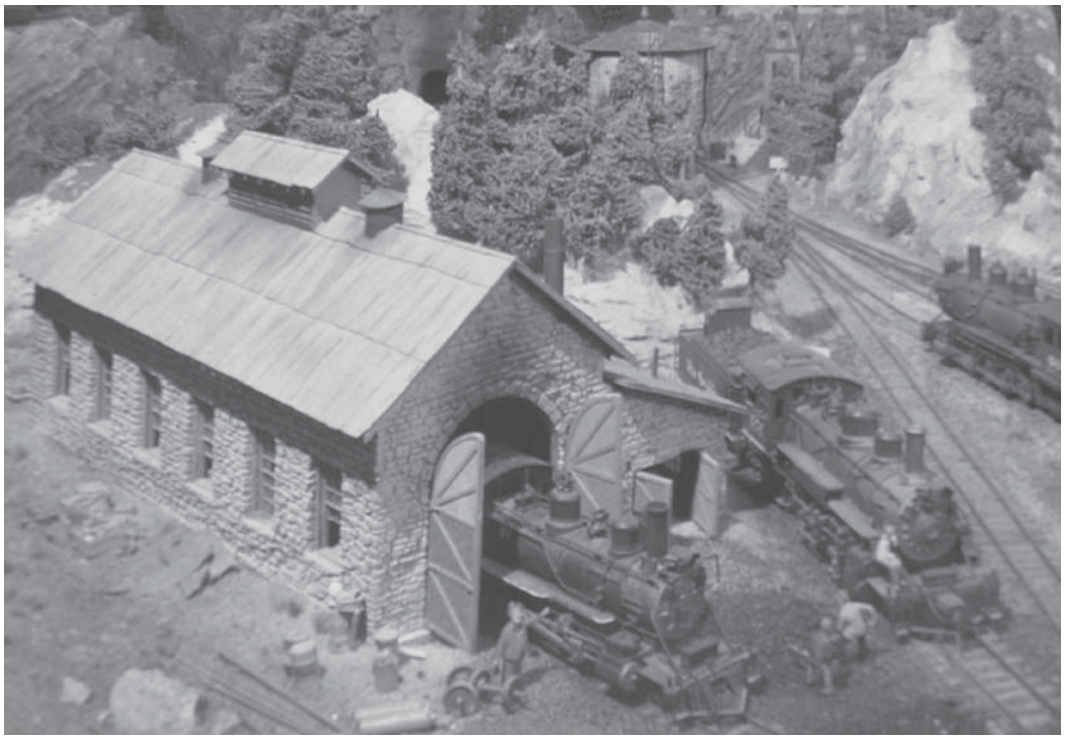
The Marker Lamp

Volume 49 **Number 4** **Fall 2003**

Gil Freitag's Stony Creek & Western, will you be in Houston next year to see it?



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The Marker Lamp

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Railroad Association

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The editorial policy of **The Marker Lamp**, the official publication of **The Lone Star Region**, shall be to contribute, wherever possible, to the promotion, growth and understanding of the hobby of Model Railroading, within the confines of good taste and responsibility.

The Marker Lamp is published once each quarter by and for the members of **The Lone Star Region** of **The National Model Railroad Association**.

Articles appearing in **The Marker Lamp** are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the officers or membership of **The Lone Star Region** or **The National Model Railroad Association**.

Address all correspondence, news, photos and drawings to the editor. All material will be gladly accepted and will be used depending on the availability of space and suitability of material. None will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.

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President's Message

by Jim Packer, MMR

It's about time to put up the lawn mower and get serious about building a railroad. There are still leaves to rake, but the confines of the train room are looking more inviting every day (unless you have a garden railroad, of course). It really is amazing how much there is to do outside, when it is just too hot to be outside!

It is not too early to start making plans to attend the 2004 LSR convention to be held in Houston June 9-13. The convention committee is hard at work preparing for your arrival, and you can expect a really fine agenda, with great clinics and a lot of layouts on the tour. If you are a new member of the NMRA or the Lone Star Region, you really need to be there. If you are a long-time member of the region, you really need to be there. In other words, the convention is an important part of LSR life. Everybody needs to be there! If you have used the excuse in the past that you didn't want to be gone on Father's Day, that won't work for 2004, because the convention is the weekend before Father's Day! I can't overstate it; YOU need to go to the conventions. So, mark it on your calendar right now, and then finish reading this.

At the risk of repeating myself, I want to encourage you once again, to read the reports in Scale Rails (formerly the NMRA Bulletin) concerning the Long Range Plan and the proposed NMRA Regulations, replacing the Constitution and By-Laws. Each issue has comments by Allan Pollock, Charlie Getz, and others, writing to explain and answer questions. If you have a chance, open the NMRA website at www.nmra.org and you can find both documents reproduced in their entirety. There are rumors and opinions concerning the upcoming vote. This may the most important vote ever in the NMRA organization. You should plan to vote when the ballots are out, and you should know what the issues are.

The LSR has a large inventory of N-scale and HO cars released over the last several years. If you will check lonestarregion.com, you will find a list of available cars, prices, and how to order. Eunice Linda, the LSR's HO and N-scale Car Dispatcher, will be happy to help you. Cars over 3 years old are offered at a discount from the original price. I bought a couple of the Supreme Feed Mill hopper cars commemorating John Lott while at the Lubbock convention last summer and was very pleased with the quality of the kit and the finished product. I encourage each of you to help the LSR and yourself by doing your part to reduce our inventory.

I would like to welcome the new members of the region, and I would like to call your attention to one new member, David Barron. David comes to us from the Sunshine Region (Florida) and is Master Model Railroader #200. It is always nice to have a new MMR in the region, even if he comes to us with the certificate in hand. With that, I will encourage the rest of you to work on your own Achievement Program Certificates and put your name on the LSR list of MMR's along with his and the others who have already earned that distinction.

Model railroading is a great hobby. Let's keep on having fun and encourage others to join in with us. You and they will both be glad you did.

View from the Spar Pole

By Chuck Lind, MMR

Like everyone else summer has been a busy time. It seems that I always end up with more projects than time, and they are not just "honey do's", you can ask her and she will tell you that she is still waiting on some of her projects. Like others though, as the weather turns cooler, I start to plan on model railroading again. I attended the National NarrowGauge convention in Denver the first week in September and just returned from an O gauge meet in Abilene. Conventions and meets are where I go to get my batteries charged and get back to some serious modeling.

The Houston group is planning for what looks to be a great convention this next June and you should make plans to be there. It doesn't make any difference if you are a new or old member of the Lone Star Region it should be one of your goals to attend. They will have operating sessions on several of the great layouts in the area so sign up when you get the chance. As many of you know, I like to build models and so the contest room is always a favorite place for me. So the rest of you get busy and build something to put in the contest room. Taking the first step and entering the contest is one way to start on the path toward Master Modeler which should be a long term goal. Let's try and fill up the contest room this next year and make the judges work with all the catagories filled.

I have written an editorial on the NMRA long-range plan as I read it and after listening to the concerns of some of my fellow editors. While these comments are my own, and not the opinion of the NMRA, I feel that you should read my comments, read the reports in Scale Rails and discuss this with your Director and our LSR Officers. Don't just take one person's viewpoint in this important vote. Above all, after you have learned as much as possible, be sure and VOTE. Every vote will count, so don't just sit back and complain. Voice your opinion.

Back in San Antonio, Al mentioned that we had some modelers that were only lacking 1 or 2 certificates from becoming a Master Modeler. Does Al need to mention names? I know at least two of them. Let's get busy and put the pencil to the paper and finish things up so we can have another group get their certificates in Houston in June of 2004!

Notice that this issue is only 20 pages instead of the usual 24 pages. The reason, **no articles received.** Remember that if you are working on Author in the Advancment Program the easiest way to get published is send it to the *Marker Lamp* and you won't have to wait a year for it to get published and you will be able to share it with your fellow region members. So warm up the keyboard and get your articles sent in. The deadline for the next issue is January 15.

Your vote will count!

Editorial comments by Chuck Lind

Before long you will be asked to vote on the NMRA's Long-Range Plan which is a new Constitution and By-Laws. After reading and studying the documents, along with discussing it with officers and other editors, it is my recommendation that you **VOTE NO!** I will review some of the items that I disagree with in making this decision.

Part of this plan is a continuation of the single dues structure. Presently members are given the choice if they want to be part of the Lone Star Region and they pay one payment to headquarters and then the LSR is sent $5.00 per member. If the NMRA fails to collect your dues and the LSR Secretary/Treasurer collects it instead, we keep all $6.00. Under the new structure all NMRA members in our region would be part of the Lone Star Region. Sounds good doesn't it? The problem is, they will only be sending us $3.00 per year for each member. This is a loss of $2.00/$3.00 per member to the region. Presently it cost us about $5.00 per member per year to print and mail *The Marker Lamp* to our members. If you do the math you can see we are $2.00 short. This problem could have been partially alleviated if there was not the addition of a "grandfather clause" on existing NMRA members who don't belong to the LSR. This allows those members to opt out of the region under the new plan and be referred to as "Legacy Members." Without the "grandfather clause," we would have to provide more *Marker Lamp* copies but would receive $3.00 from more members and hopefully more convention support. Perhaps even more important, we would finally have fixed the problem of split memberships in the NMRA & LSR. The idea that the NMRA has come up with is that each region could charge a subscription fee and send newsletters only to those who pay for the subscription. Sounds like we are back to double dues to me.

At last count there were 1030 NMRA members living in the Lone Star Region of which 658 belong to the LSR and receive *The Marker Lamp*, which I don't look at as a benefit but as a vital tool to communicate with our members. Each quarter you receive a newsletter where the president keeps you informed of what is happening both nationally and in our region. It is also an opportunity for you find out about upcoming events and our yearly convention. On the average we have had about 200-250 attending our region convention. While this attendance is down from the 80's, what would it be without the newsletter? Each city would have to print and mail notices to all the members notifying them and promoting their convention. This will add extra cost to those hosting the convention.

I don't pretend to think our newsletter is as valuable as *Model Railroader* or some other national publication, but it fills a void. It keeps us informed of what is happening in the region and the different divisions. It also gives members working on the Achievement Program a place to write some modeling articles that maybe wouldn't get published in the national press in a timely manner. If we go with charging for the subscription our cost may go even higher since the present cost is based on numbers and if you reduce the quantity the price per piece goes even higher.

My second problem is the selection of Trustees, who will be called Directors. Presently each region has one trustee to represent them. They are made up of 17 region trustees. Two of them are overseas, British and Australian. The balances are from regions in the US with some of those regions (4) extending into Canada. Under the new system there would be 9 Directors and the US would be divided into 3 sections, with one of those including all of Canada, so it is possible that the total US representation could be 2 Directors. If the plan passes this is how the board will be set up. It shall consist of 9 members, one from the Eastern District, one from the Western District (this includes Texas), and one from the Central District (this includes Louisiana), and also includes Canada. To better represent our members in other countries you would have 1 from the Atlantic District, which is made up of Europe, Central America, Mexico, Caribbean and Africa. You will have 1 from the Pacific District, which is made up of Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East. Two members will be at-large positions. One of the at-large will be elected world wide while the other will be voted only within the 50 states and the provinces of Canada. Canada will elect 1 member only from Canada in accordance with the existing provisions governing NMRA Canada. The last position will be called The Regional Advisory Council member. A Regional Advisory Council will be formed with one member from each region, usually the Region President or other member elected to serve on the council. The council will nominate one or two candidates from the membership for the ninth director position. No member can serve as a region officer, elected or appointed, and serve as an NMRA director at the same time, i.e. the Region President cannot be an NMRA director. Does this new structure give you better representation? I feel we are **not** getting better representation, but less, and the new structure even splits our region.

I urge you to go to the NMRA web site at www.NMRA.org and study the Long-Range Plan and the Regulations. You can also contact your Division Director and the officers and ask for their opinions and get feedback **before** you vote. As one member put it when I was researching this, the NMRA in an effort to solve their problem (of running out of money) has created more problems with the regions. They get more money and we get less, which sounds like a back door dues increase.

The date for the vote has not been set as I write this, but my best guess is that it will be after the first of the year.

Mastering Modeling...Scratchbuilding

By MMR Tracy and MMR Terry Mitchell

In this installment we are going to talk about the final section of the contest form which pertains to Scratchbuilding. Here in the Lone Star Region, this section of the contest is worth 25 points. However if you entered a model at the national level, or other regions, the points have been reduced to 10. This is because the current trend is to place more importance on conformity to the prototype. Those Rivet -Counters have lobbied their way to reduce the importance of the most fun and satisfying part of model building, Scratchbuilding.

We call the scratchbuilding section, the extra credit section, because you get points added for scratchbuilding as opposed to just putting a commercial part on the model. The judges aren't looking at how well the part was built, just that it was handmade. Scratchbuilding is our favorite aspect of the hobby. To many modelers this can be very intimidating. This is also becoming a dying art form, thanks to the explosion of RTR kits that has flooded the market recently.

If you've been following the columns before, you are aware that there are 5 teams of judges for each of the five categories. Whenever TNT judges the scratchbuilt portion of the contest we are surprised at how many models don't have a single item homemade on it. Because of that, we have to award zero points to the model. This puts the model at a severe disadvantage. TNT catches a lot of flak for giving zero points, but we feel we can't reward somebody for doing something that isn't there. Some have tried to say that there *HAS* to be something scratchbuilt on every model. Try as we might to find one, there are some models that do not have any item that can be classified as a scratchbuilt item. It is not that difficult to put something that is handmade on a model. Every model that is put in the contest room should have a scratchbuilt part added. That means from a Kato Diesel, an Intermountain car or even a Fine Scale Miniature can have scratchbuilt parts added. When TNT were entering contests not a single model we entered did not have something scratchbuilt on it. That doesn't mean the whole model has to be scratchbuilt. TNT has put Athearn cars in the contest and had them do very well!

There are a many ways to add scratchbuilt parts to a model. Here are just a few. Starting with an Athearn car, first shave off the precast grab irons and ladders. Now comes the fun part. Fabricate your own ladders and grabirons. This really is easier than it sounds. The grab irons can be made from flat nosed pliers. Find a set of pliers with no teeth and that is close to the scale width of a grab iron. Usually the head is tapered thinner at the point and thicker as it gets closer to the handles. Somewhere in the middle is an exact length for grabirons. Mark that with a pen or even file a groove into the pliers. Take some 22 or 26 gauge wire, depending on your scale. We prefer floral wire because it is easier to bend. (Don't buy the green colored wire, stay with the unpainted wire.) Then simply bend the wire over the pliers to make a "U", and cut off the legs about as long as the grab is wide. Then take the grab iron and bend it again to get the "dip" in the rung. That's it. We have even thrown away the stock grabirons that come with the higher priced kits and used these for the points. Ladders are a bit more complicated. First build a jig for the ladder. It might take several times to get the jig right, but it is better to get it right in the long run. When done take styrene or brass stock and put together your ladder. Brake rigging and piping is another way to add points to rolling stock. Again we use floral wire because it is easier to bend. You can also make your own roof walks out of stripwood. So when you finish, you have a stock Athearn car with homemade scratchbuilt parts and some nice brake rigging. In our book that adds close to 8 points to a model.

For Diesel Locomotives it is about the same. Add the same grabirons and ladders. We make our own MU hoses. We take bristles from a hairbrush. Cut them to length, bend them, crimp and end and paint it silver, Drill a hole in the pilot and ACC it. Voila' a simple grab iron. Does it look as real as commercial part? No, but it is close enough for us. Besides we are after points not looks. Rotary beacons can be made also. Take a yellow glass jewel bead and stick a straight pin it. Take a small piece of styrene the same width as the bead and pierce the pin into it. Drill a hole in the cab roof. ACC the pin from the bottom and cut off the excess part of the pin.
On Diesels we always tried to add homemade sand hoses, speed recorders, cab sunshades, and air conditioners too. For Steam locomotives a tool box scratchbuilt, coal or wood in the tender, cab curtains, and hoses wrapped around the domes add a few points.

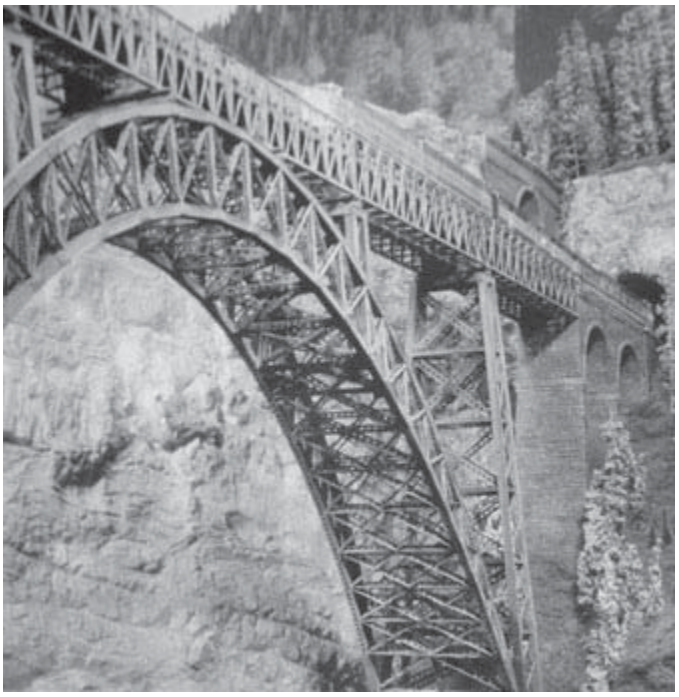
For structures it is really easy to add details. Let's start with the most obvious part of a structure, the roof. First off if it is a kit with paper shingles make your own shingles. It isn't as hard as you think. With a little thought and patience you can make a jig to make rows of shingles at one time. Add a tarpaper roof to a kit's roof made from Kleenex. You can make elevator sheds quite easy on multi level structures. Take some metal siding and make a small shed, and there is your elevator access shed.

On the walls you can make exterior piping and electrical conduit from floral wire. Curtains in the windows made from construction paper or wet a kleenex with diluted white glue and glue it to the inside wall. Then take the end and pull it through an open window. This gives the effect that the wind blew the curtain out of the window. Add a sign or two cut out of an old magazine. Or better yet make your own on a computer.

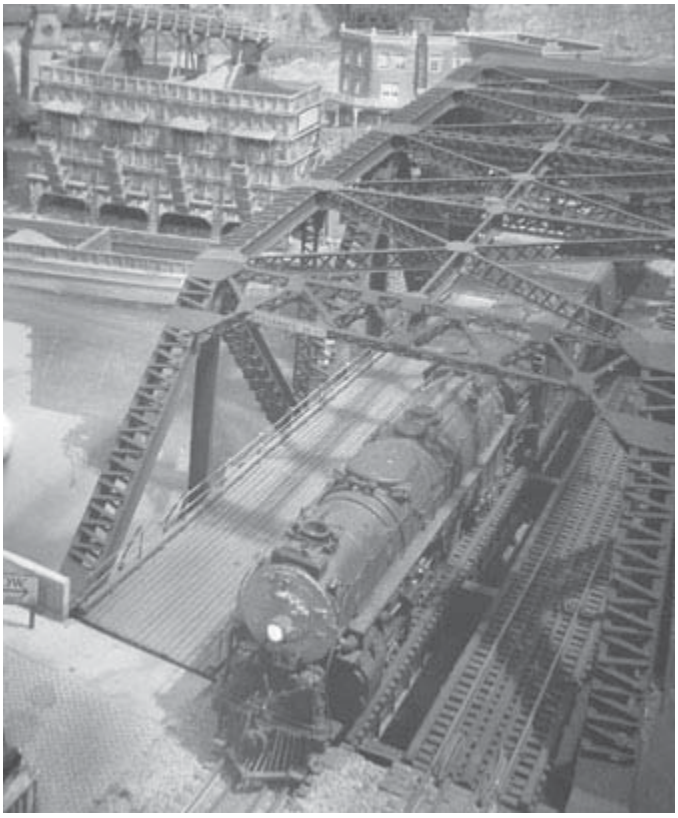
To help the judges, you need to try to fill out the form completely. Make sure you list somewhere the parts that you scratchbuilt. That doesn't mean to say the underframe detail was scratchbuilt. Tell exactly what you built. Judging scratchbuilding is the only category that isn't objective. Either there are items that are scratchbuilt or there aren't. TNT feels

Continued on page 13

Lone Star Region Convention - 2004



Above: *Don Bozman: Great Great Nothern.*



Right: *Gil Freitag: Stony Creek & Western*

Above: *Harry Daniel: Pecor River Division one of the newest HO layouts in Houston.*

Above: *Loren Neufeld: Grimy Gulch Scenic Railway a very detailed N Scale Modular Layout*

Table Top Modules or T-TRAK

The T-TRAK system of building miniature N-scale train layout modules might be the very thing you should consider for your next train layout. With this system, you save many hours of time in building fixed layouts on those huge modules. One of the best parts is that with T-TRAK, you can take it apart and put it on the bookshelf for viewing.

Why build a layout that is too heavy to carry or takes up your entire family room? With T-TRAK, you and your entire family can enjoy the trains and then put them back in their place until the next operating session. I think a perfect way to think about this system is as a “bookshelf layout”. Now, you can have your entire “empire” on a shelf and enjoy even those six axle locomotives running on precision Kato Unitrack® on a module system that locks together quickly and yet comes apart for shelf display.

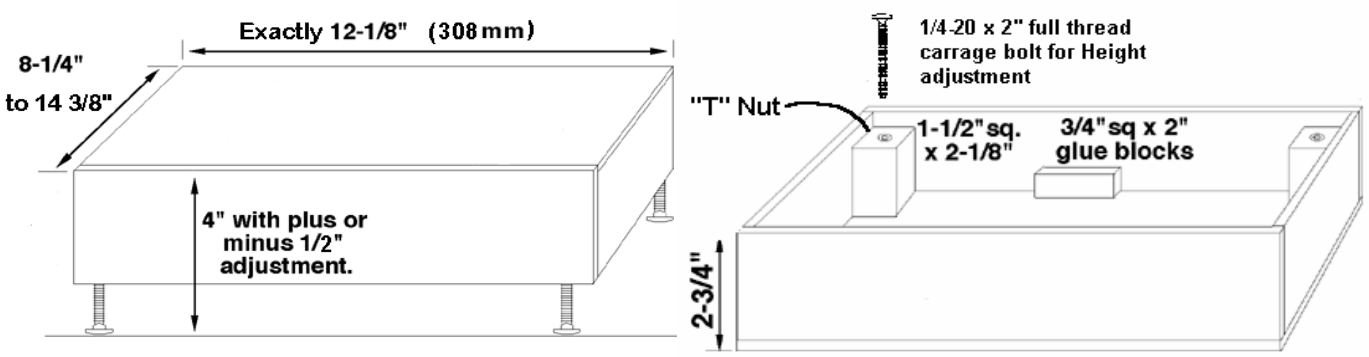
The concept that led to T-TRAK began in Japan. Lee Monaco-FitzGerald has been the voice to popularize in the USA not only the concept of T-TRAK, but first coined the term “T-TRAK”. Her background in N Scale includes years of work with N Trak. Check out the T-TRAK Website at www.ttrak.org for more information on Lee and the T-TRAC concept.

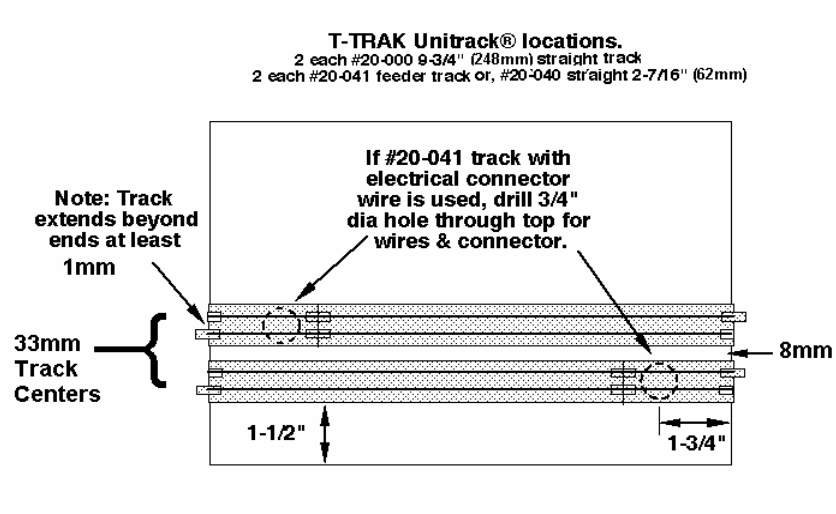
Two standards have emerged in this new modular concept. The Houston modelers have chosen the (Alternate”) standard where the tracks are placed on a 33mm track center to accommodate the KATO UNITRAK® turnouts. The original standard, the one that is used internationally has the tracks located on a 25mm track center. All other measurements are the same.

On the following page there are drawings for construction of these modules. Prefabricated ABS plastic boxes produced by ShapeMaster(www.shapemaster.com) and Pre-fabricated wooden boxes are available at AJ’s Model Trains (www.ajmodeltrains.com).

Straight Modules:

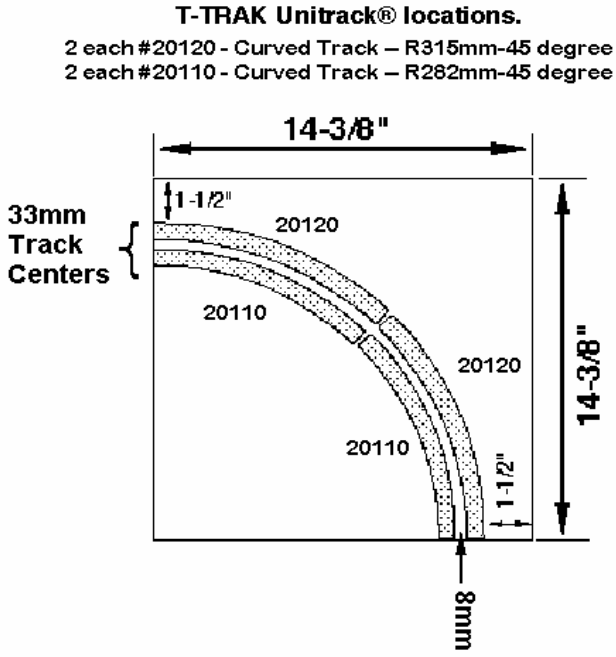
Straight Modules are exactly 308mm (12 1/8 inches) wide so that 2 pieces of KATO Unitrack® (248mm and 62mm = 310mm) fit on the top. The tracks will extend past the top edge 1mm so that the Uni-Joiners® will mate correctly. The depth of modules can vary from the Original standard of 8 1/4 all the way to 14 3/8 inches.


Exactly 12-1/8" (308 mm)
8-1/4"
to 14 3/8"
4" with plus or minus 1/2" adjustment.
1/4-20 x 2" full thread carrage bolt for Height adjustment
"T" Nut
1-1/2" sq. x 2-1/8"
3/4" sq x 2" glue blocks
2-3/4"


T-TRAK Unitrack® locations.
2 each #20-000 9-3/4" (248mm) straight track
2 each #20-041 feeder track or, #20-040 straight 2-7/16" (62mm)
Note: Track extends beyond ends at least 1mm
If #20-041 track with electrical connector wire is used, drill 3/4" dia hole through top for wires & connector.
33mm Track Centers
8mm
1-1/2"
1-3/4"

Corners:

Corner Modules are exactly 14 3/8 inches square so that 2 KATO Unitrack® radius (318mm and 281mm) curved track fit on the top. The tracks will extend just barely past the edges so that the Uni-Joiners® will mate correctly.



Gulf Coast Express 2004

Plans are moving along nicely for the **2004 GULF COAST EXPRESS**, next year's LSR convention. It'll be held at the Holiday Inn Houston Southwest, at 11160 Southwest Freeway (Hwy 59) near the Sam Houston Toll Road (West Belt). The fun will begin Wednesday afternoon, June 9, and culminate on Sunday, June 13.

You'll be able to keep up with the latest plans and events through the convention website at **www.lonestarregion.com/gce_2004**. The convention registration form, in downloadable pdf format, and hotel reservation information will be available there as well.

We're already beginning to line up clinicians, and we're pleased to announce that **Charlie Getz**, well-known author and narrow gauge modeler, will be our featured banquet speaker, as well as presenting a clinic or two. Those of you who attended the LSR convention in San Antonio a couple years ago can attest to what a fascinating speaker he is.

Layouts for the tours are also being arranged, and in addition to the usual drive-yourself tours we're planning a **Super Tour**, complete with bus, which will visit several outstanding but more distant layouts.

Thursday night we've got something special in store: the **Houston Area Live Steamers** will be hosting us for dinner and an evening of riding trains on their extensive railroad.

Other activities will include both silent and live auctions, prototype tours, raffles, bingo and/or other games, rest and relaxation in one of our private parlors.

T-TRAK

Among the attractions at the hotel itself will **be T-Trak layouts in both N and HO scales**, and guess what, EVERYONE is invited and encouraged to build a module and bring it to the show. If you're not familiar yet with T-Trak, it's a new modular system that's gaining popularity by leaps and bounds. Using one of the pre-fab modules all you have to do is the scenery; you could have a completed module in as little as one of two evenings. All modules will automatically be entered in a **Popular Vote contest**, and you can also enter **the judged T-Trak contest i**f you wish.

The **T-Trak concept** is simple and "user-friendly"; here are the basics:

- Ready-made modules – Modules in several configurations are commercially available. ShapeMaster (www.shapemaster.com) produces ABS plastic modules, and pre-fabricated wood modules are available by mail order or in person from AJ's Model Trains (www.ajmodeltrains.com).
- Small size – The basic module in N scale measures only 8 ¼" x 12 1/8".
- Table-top – No legs to drag along and attach.
- Easy portability – Small enough to carry enough for a whole layout in your car.
- Snap track – Kato Unitrak is the recommended track system.
- Virtually no wiring – Current is carried thru the rails, only one pair of wires need be attached somewhere on the layout.

N scale T-Trak standards are complete and can be found on the Internet at www.ttrak.org. Be sure to use the "Alternate" standards in which the tracks are placed at 33mm spacing center to center.

HO standards are nearing completion, and will be placed on the convention web site when ready. Tentatively, the straight modules will be 18 inches wide and 12-18 inches deep. Recommendations call for 2 mainlines, each consisting of 2 nine inch pieces of Bachmann EZ Track.. The corners will be on a 26 and 28 inch radius. Each corner forms a 60 degree arc. It will take 6 corners to make a complete loop.

Both sets of standards are also available by sending an SSAE to Loren Neufeld, 9821 Oboe, Houston TX 77025.

Cowcatcher Division 1

by Jim Howard

It doesn't seem possible that 2003 is 75% gone. Seems like a short time ago that we N. Texans were looking forward to spring and the Lubbock convention. It also means that fall has arrived and so have winter train shows. Check out John Hawkins "Up the Track" column for dates and times so that you don't miss any nearby.

As I mentioned in the last Marker Lamp issue, the Cowcatcher Division is attempting to get back to a regular schedule of meetings to be held at least quarterly. By the time you read this our first (planned for November 8th) should have been held at Lockheed Recreation Assn. In addition to getting acquainted and having an old fashion bull-session, I had asked LSR President Jim Packer to brief everyone on the details of the NMRA long-range plan. This is something that is going to have a great impact on our region's finances.

Several members continue to engineer on other railroads around the country. VP Jerry Schoenberg has a daughter living in San Diego, CA and while visiting her and family always manages to work in a day operating on the San Diego or LaMesa MRR Clubs in Balboa Park. Most recently he, Bob Bray, Pearre Davenport, and LMRA RR Club President Dale Schmidtbleicher (whew!) traveled to New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA and operated on 4 different layouts there including the Crescent City Club. All agree that, in addition to admiring other's layouts, it is interesting to see how the various operating systems function.

My wife, Jo Ann, and I had a thoroughly enjoyable vacation during September when we flew to Vancouver, B.C. and boarded the Rocky Mountaineer. Rocky Mountaineer Railtours motto is "The Most Spectacular Train Trip in The World". If you've made the trip I'm sure you agree. If you haven't, you should. This was our second time to see the Canadian Rockies from their full length dome car. The first trip in year 2000 was just 2 days from Vancouver to Calgary. This time we took their "Golden Circle" tour which involved riding the train from Vancouver to Banff, tour bus from Banff to Jasper over-nighting in Banff, Lake Louise, and Jasper, then boarding the train for the return to Vancouver. The itinerary was a busy one, but the train staff, scenery, and pampering made it seem all too short.

This seems like a good opportunity to alert readers to a problem that seems to arise all too often. All my fellow LSR buddies had long since received the summer issue of the Marker Lamp while my copy was not to be seen. The reason given was because my LSR dues had expired March 1, 2003. Seemed unusual since I had to be paid up before I could have been elected as Division 1 Director. Turns out that when we pay our joint dues to NMRA their administration sometimes fails to report that information to the Region. Therefore our Region Secretary's list reflects an expired membership. I know of others who have had similar experiences. I find this totally unacceptable and can only surmise that if (or when) the long-range plan goes into effect we can expect more breakdowns in the communication wires. My suggestion to each LSR member is to stay aware of your dues payment and check with the Secretary immediately if you have any question.

This is all the news for now. Until next time "Keep-um on the rails".

Bayou Division 2

by Marvin Ackermann

No Report received

North East Texas Division 3

by Bill McPherson

With the coming of fall, the train shows and other railroad activities kick into high gear in this area. The next big events will be the annual Fort Worth Area Train Show on November 15-16 and the Dallas Area Show on January 17-18. Many model railroaders in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex actively participate in both shows, and club layouts in both areas are open. I thought it would be informative to bring you up-to-date on the activities of some of these organizations in the Dallas area, and I will report on others in future articles.

Dallas, Garland & Mesquite Model Railroad Club – As happens all too frequently when the layout seems to be almost completed, a club has to move. This one recently relocated to 4111 Hwy. 80 in Mesquite at Town East Blvd. They feature N, NN3, and Z scales, and have just about all of the trackwork back in place. Their regular meeting time is Saturday morning, and they usually break for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Contact Billy Roden at 972-690-1130 for details.

East Texas Model Railroad Club – This club moved recently from Greenville to Pecan Street in Commerce. It will feature a large HO layout using CVP Easy DCC. Open houses are held around the middle of each month, and work sessions are on Saturday morning. Please contact Ed McCamey at 913-560-0666 or view a neat website at www.coslar.us/etmrc for club information and a map.

McKinney Avenue Transit Authority — Instead of just looking at them, you can ride several of the old-time trolleys over their 5 mile "layout" just north of downtown Dallas. That part of Dallas is experiencing continued redevelopment of nice restaurants, interesting stores, inspiring office buildings, and fancy high-rise apartments — all a short walk from the trolley. Already this year the MATA has had a substantial increase in riders to over 150,000. They are currently rebuilding the Tandy (formerly the Leonard Department Store) trolley which ran in downtown Fort Worth until about a year ago. The trolleys run about 15 hours daily, and the car shop is open daily for visiting.

Contact Lynne Fleming, who used to work at Bobbye Hall's and now is one of the busy motormen, at 972-680-1532 for information or John Landrum, 214-855-0006, for MATA membership information.

Texas Northern Model Railroad Club — This club has been in their new location almost two years now at 3515 Forney Road in Mesquite. This is one of the largest layouts in the Dallas area with over 2,000 feet of track. They have just converted to the CVP Easy DCC system with wireless throttles. This is creating a terrific upsurge in interest and offering new "challenges" for the 45 members. They meet on Thursday night. Please contact Lynne Fleming, club president, at 972-680-1532 f for information.

Union Station Model Railway Club — Talk about nostalgia, a model railroad club that meets in Dallas' historic Union Station, really has it. It features a HO layout modeling the Texas & Pacific from Shreveport to Dallas and an O scale layout modeling steam, diesel, and traction in the 40's - 50's era. It is open on Mondays and Thursdays. Contact David Podhrasky at 972-484-9326 for details.

Cen-Tex Division 4

by Bob Alson, Jr.

The busy season for model railroading is here! The grass is on its last leg. The rains are coming and it's too wet to work outside. Soooooo……. Up to the layout room to make some progress on the Hewitt and Central Texas. Hope you have the opportunity to do so too.

The Temple show is now history and was very successful despite the perennial show competitor. Read-GATS. We had a LSR booth set up thanks to **John and Bradley Linda.** Several LSR cars were moved off of the region's roster and onto private owners' rosters. We had a couple of layouts present that have homes in div. 4. Those two were Austin Tinplate Trackers and the AustNtrak clubs. Everyone had a good time, Several of you stopped by the booth to say "hi" and to find out about our division meet on Nov. 8 at 1:00 PM at the Moody Depot in Temple. The depot is on the Railroad and Pioneer museum grounds. We will have a couple of clinics, try to hold a small operating session and of course, watch the ever-present BNSF traffic out of the depot freight doors. It should be a nice time for fun and friendship. Hopefully, you get the Marker Lamp before then. If not I'll let you know how it went.

Speaking of how it went. The Austin Jamboree was Nov. 1. I'll give you a full report on it in my next report. Mark your calendars for Jan. 10 and 11 for a show in Waco. It's small, but fun. If you hang around until the end of the show, I'll be happy to show anyone the progress on the home layout.

That's all for now. Drop me a line to say hi and as always keep me posted on your e-mail addresses. It's the easiest way to let you know of division plans and get togethers. Keep on Modelling!!!!!!!!.

Division 5

by Ronald Kutch

No report received

Division 6

by Fred Bock

As I type this, the weather is finally turning cooler - thank goodness. In August, the San Antonio Model Railroad Association (SAMRA) had a successful two-day "family train show" at Crossroads Mall in San Antonio (corner of I-10 and Loop 410). This is the first train show held there in recent memory.

Crossroads Mall is also the current headquarters for SAMRA's HO modular layout. In addition, the San Antonio N-Trak (SANTRAK) has moved from their former location at Westlakes Mall to the Crossroads Mall location. Since Crossroads Mall is centrally located, it is a good place for people from all over San Antonio to come view model railroads in two different scales.

It's a season for train shows. By the time this is published, the Alamo Model Railroad Association (AMRE) will have held their annual fall two-day show at the Live Oak Civic Center on the far northeast corner of San Antonio.

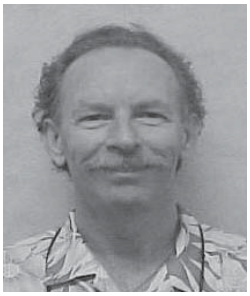
And: mark your calendars. The annual SAMRA model railroad jamboree and train show will be held at the Live Oak Civic Center the first Saturday and Sunday of February 2004.

That's all the news for this quarter's report. With the cooler weather here, it's time to let the lawn rest and stay indoors and enjoy the hobby. To all Division 6 members out there: have a holy Ramadan; Happy Chanukah; Merry Christmas; a joyous Kwanza; and Happy New Year!

New Members

Please welcome the following new members:

Phil Chamberlain - Dallas, Texas
Wes Smitherman - Holland, Texas
Gary Maitland - New Braunfels, Texas
Bob Brand - Red Oak, Texas
John King - Austin, Texas
Dave Barron - N.Richland Hills, Texas
Larry Wiertz - Tyler, Texas
James Eby - College Station, Texas
Tom Hopkins - Georgetown, Texas
Chadrick Bran - Houston, Texas
Oliver Philippi - Houston, Texas
Thomas Kelly - Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Gary McMills - Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Division 7

by Don Kimmell

We have survived another typical Louisiana summer…hot and humid, as usual.

What is going on in Division 7? Well, I understand that The Sue Lines Crew has been doing some traveling, mainly down South to do some marathon operating sessions—4 to 5 in one weekend!! Way to go guys, keep'em rolling!!

Charles Goodrich, MMR is building a few more awesome structures, doesn't say exactly what, but you "O" scale troops had better watch out cause I am sure they will be at next years Conventions' contests.

The Ark-La-Tex Bunch (of which I am a member) spent the summer doing work on their "Club House"—actually a 1921 Illinois Central Dinning Car. New flooring, display shelves and a few coats of paint were the tip of the iceberg….we still have to get the booths back from the upholstery shop!! We do have an operating layout…no buildings,or scenery, but we can run trains. Now to install the "new" A/C…it is always something. They have attended two (2) train shows during the past Quarter…Temple's and just back from Lockheed's. Both were a success, all members had a GREAT time!! The Temple Club's club house is a killer, we spent Saturday night sitting on the freight platform watching BNSF go about their normal work…I am sure the various engineers and conductors were wondering what all these people were doing just sitting there and waving like fools at everything that was moving!! It was great fun. We have just gotten back from the D/FW area for the Lockheed Recreation Association annual (21st) Train Show. As usual a good time was had by all. They do manage to get a tremendous selection of Vendors selling a very good assortment of all gauges. It was well worth the time browsing the wares….I found a couple of GREAT deals!! Our Club always marks the calendar for both of these shows.

The Kansas City Southern Christmas Train layout is progressing very nicely. All track is down and wired, all backdrops painted..not enough trees for Charles' taste, but we are trying. Now comes the "dirt" work. We have a number of buildings completed and still have more to go. If you would like to see a work in progress be sure to visit the KCS's web site, Paul Houge and Tillie Caileff have been shooting away, sometimes you can't see for the flashes going off!!!

That is about all going on here in the eastern reaches of the region, I do know a number of members are planning on attending the Holiday Train Show in Forth Worth during November. See you next quarter. Don Kimmell, prrdpkjr@msn.com

Texas Gulf Division 8

by Jim Long, MMR

By the time this is printed, the general meeting of the Division at the HALS (Houston Area Live Steamers) facilities in Zube park will be history. The menu has been expanded to include hamburgers and fried turkeys in addition to the traditional "tube" steaks. All the members of the Division are hoping that we get about 6 inches of rain less this year than we got last year.

Several Division members are involved in constructing a large model railroad at the Texas Children's Hospital in Houston's medical center. This model railroad is being built for the enjoyment of the hospital patients. I hope to pressure Don Bozman to write an article for the *Marker Lamp* about the project.

The November Model Railroad Home Layout Tour celebrating November – "National Model Railroad Month" is again sponsored by the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club and is all set to go with 67 model railroads on the tour. Because of the large number of model railroads, the last 2 weekends of October and the first weekend of December have been added to the month of November.

www.lonestarregion.com

LSR Web Page

Have you visited the Lone Start Region web site?

If you haven't be sure to visit us at www.lonestarregion.com and take a look at the work Duane has done. You will notice that it has a tab "gallery" and "clinic" these are areas where he needs your help. Next time you are in the railroad room or at your club take some photos, digital preferred, and send them to Duane so he can put them on the web. What better way to share the latest project or the work you have done with others. The same is true for the clinic section, if you have given a clinic with a handout share that and he will get it on the web so everyone can enjoy the clinic.

The web site is the Lone Star Region's window to the world so lets make it one of the best web sites out there.

the points should break down something like this 75-100% scratchbuilt give above 17 points. 50 % scratchbuilt 12-17 points. 25 to 50 % 5-12 points. Less than 25 % 1 to 5 points. As we said before, zero means zero.

Scratchbuilding isn't as difficult as it seems. If you start with small projects like we mentioned above, in no time you will be able to scratchbuild larger project like complete buildings and rolling stock. That is where the fun really begins. What a country we live in! In Germany, there is not any way to say scratchbuilding. Here, not only is it possible, it is encouraged!

That concludes this series on how the contest system works, and how to add more points to your scores. It isn't the end of this column, however. Stay tuned and we will have more in depth articles on how to weather, construct, detail, decal, paint, and cast. This is just the tip of the iceberg, we have more information that we are willing to share.

Back to modeling now.
TNT

FROM THE PAST (FALL 1978)

By Jim Long, MMR

Jack Leming of Dallas resigned after 12 years as the editor of the *Marker Lamp*. Jack says that he wants to get in a little more fishing. President Mark Eskew announced that Keith Gutierez of Richardson is the new Marker Lamp Editor. Keith says to keep those stories coming and he will try and make each *Marker Lamp* more interesting than the last.

Dr. Richard Kamm gave a report on his Sue Line Railroad located in Bossier City, LA. The Sue Line is one of 6 HO model railroads which make up the North Louisiana Connecting Railroad Association (NoLaCRA). The other members of the NoLaCRA are the Missouri Southern and Dorcheat and Lake Bistineau both located in Minden, LA; the Louisiana and Nashville, the Louisiana Longleaf, and the Arkansas, Louisiana and Western all located in Shreveport, LA. The Sue Line has about 150 ft of mainline and branch line operation. The railroad is experimenting with a home-built version of Digi-track 1600 which brought about the roads first Diesel. All other motive power in pure steam with Consolidations and 10 Wheelers being the largest motive power on the line.

Malcolm Vordenbaum (the old dutchman from Wichita Falls) was awarded the Loeffler award. Malcolm is well known inside and outside the LSR. Malcolm gave his first clinic at Oklahoma City's 1955 McoR convention and he has been giving them ever since. Track work has been his favorite item with time out for a few cabooses.

The 1979 LSR Convention is scheduled for June 22-24 in New Orleans. The Fountain Bay Hotel will be the convention hotel and there will be a drawing for a free room for those who pre-register.

Louisiana Rail Run

By Jerry Schoenberg

Operation is alive and well in Louisiana! Jim Lofland and his team put on great operation sessions in September. Operators from around the Lone Star Region attended, and those that made the trip were well rewarded.

Jim's layout, Tall Timber & Santa Fe, is a delight to operate and offers many switching challenges. The layout is operated by an ingenious block control system that allows lots of local switching. Rail Op is newly added to the T T & S F, and Jim has already started to adapt it to the operations he wants to achieve. There is never enough time to fully enjoy this layout. The scenery, structures and detail effort, along with great track work, make this a truly unique layout.

A second operating layout in Baton Rouge was the Mid South Railroad. The layout is built by a small club headed up by Jack Green. This layout was a lot of fun to operate. It offered some tricky switching moves, and good separation between the locations of activity. The scratch building and scenery greatly add to the visitors' enjoyment. The Mid South RR operates with DCC and Rail Op. They use a dispatcher with radios and build trains in real time as needed. There is talk of this railroad doubling in size.

The great C & O Railroad was very well modeled and is located on the top floor of Lou Shultz's home in Covington, LA. Lou and his crew have done an outstanding job of representing the C & O with lots of steam passenger, freight and, of course, coal drags. The proto-typical "rules" of operation on this large layout make it a fun job to operate. The railroad operates with DCC and car cards. A dispatcher with telephones is utilized. This railroad gets better and better with added scenery and a real eastern railroad appearance.

The Crescent City Railroad located in Metairie, LA is a large club layout. The club is over 50 years old, and many talents over the years have contributed to the layout's wonderful scenery. The effort to depict the Louisiana landscape from bayous to oil refineries is very well done. The dispatcher kept all of us busy running many trains via radio communications. The layout runs on block control and hand written manifests.

The great friendships developed traveling to and from Louisiana and between layouts added to the weekend. This group has certainly accomplished a lot in the "operation" sector of the great hobby of Model Railroading.

Up the Track

By John Hawkins

If you have anything you need to submit to "Up the Track" I prefer to receive such information via e-mail, but I will accept it any way you want to send it. My email address is jaybee@airmail.net and my USPS address is 1723 Shufords Court, Lewisville, TX 75067.

Now, here are some upcoming events.

Houston, Texas
Public Run Day
Houston Area Live Steamers
Int. Hwy 290 at Roberts Road, Houston, Texas
Third Saturday of each month - March thru November- 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM **Free**–All invited with families and kids
Contact: Peter Bryan at 713-939-8002
or e-mail peterb@pdq.net

San Antonio, Texas
15th Annual Fall Train Show
Sponsored by the Alamo Model Railroad Engineers
Saturday, Oct. 18, 2003 - 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm
Sunday, Oct. 19, 2003 - 11:00 am to 4:00 pm
Live Oak Civic Center - 8101 Pat Booker Road
(I-35 & FM 1604, NE side of San Antonio, TX)
Operating Layouts: N, HO, O27, G
Hourly Door Prizes (Must Be Present to Win)
Raffle Contest (Both Days, Need Not Be Present To Win)
23,000 Square Feet of Model Railroad Displays
Vendors will be offering model railroading equipment & accessories in all scales (N to G)
Contact: Alamo Model Railroad Engineers, Texas Transportation Museum, 11731 Wetmore Road, San Antonio, TX 78247 or call Harold Fleischer 210-497-2532

San Angelo, TX
Christmas at the Depot and Railfest
The Railway Historical Museum is planning a great "Christmas at the Depot" and a major "Railfest" both kicking off on December 5th. The Railfest will be for the weekend only, but Christmas at the Depot will run through the New Year. The Depot will be decorated in a Christmas winter motif.

Round Rock, TX
Austin Area Model Railroad Jamboree
Sponsored by the Austin Model RR Association
First United Methodist Church, 1004 N. Mays, Round Rock, TX
Saturday, November 1, 2003
Flea Market/Clinics 8:30 to 2:30
Layout Tours Saturday and Sunday afternoons
Admission: $4 for adults, $1 for kids
Contact: Tom Pearson, 1914 West Creek Loop, Round Rock, TX 78681, 512-388-2918

Fort Worth, TX
Fort Worth Area Train Show
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 15, 2003
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 15, 2003
Amon Carter Exhibits Building at the Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3401 West Lancaster, Fort Worth, TX. 76107.
Admission charge $6.00 per person, children 10 and under free.
Additional information maybe obtained from Robert Bray, 1820 Spruce Lane, Benbrook, TX 76126, 817-249-4965 (6-10 pm CST) or e-mail to robert.l.bray@lmco.com.

Plano, TX
Dallas Area Train Show
10:00 am to 5:00 pm Saturday, Jan. 17, 2004
10:00 am to 4:00 pm Sunday, Jan. 18, 2004
Plano Center, 2000 E. Spring Creek Parkway, Plano, TX 75074
(Southwest corner of Spring Creek Parkway and Jupiter Road)
Additional information maybe obtained from Robert Bray, 1820 Spruce Lane, Benbrook, TX 76126, 817-249-4965 (6-10 pm CST) or e-mail to robert.l.bray@lmco.com.

Musings

by Bob Muse-Secretary/Treasure

First of all I would like to thank you for selecting me as your new Secretary/Treasure of the Lone Star Region.

LSR Financial Condition: Three months ending 9-30-03

Beginning Check Book Balance (7/1/2003)			$3,742.79
Income			
Dealer Ad	$ 40.00		
Pike Ad		16.00	
Car Sales	623.39		
LSR Dues	26.00		
NMRA Dues		754.00	
Debit to Division 1	256.13		
Convention Reimbursement	2,000.00		
Mutual Fund Dividends		70.15	
Subtotal			3,785.67
Expenses			
Marker Lamp Printing	$743.07		
NMRA Fee	114.00		
Postage Permit	150.00		
Postage	106.13		
Officer & Trustee expense	350.00		
Web Site	99.50		
Subtotal			(1,562.70)
Ending Check Book Balance (9/30/2003)			$5,965.76

Jerry Schoenberg left the financial records in excellent shape. Financially we are very strong. However, we do need to recruit new members. There are more than 1000 NMRA members in the Lone Star Region of which only about 600 are members of LSR.

Miscellaneous:

Promote your layout by purchasing a pike ad ($8 per year).

Please renew your Lone Star Region membership when you renew your NMRA dues. Just be sure that you check the box for regional dues and include the extra $6.

Contact me at MuseIII@aol.com if you have questions or comments.

Hobby Shop Corner

By Carl Lester, Owner Lester's Boxcar Works

The "NEW" HO, HON3, O, ON30, and N scale models listed below have been released or are due to be released soon. Check your local hobby shop or model train store to get a look at these outstanding models. Model railroading is getting better and better. For you ON3 and ON30 modelers I have some "new release" news…. A C-16 2-8-0, K27 2-8-2 and a 16 ton 2 cylinder 2 truck Shay kit are due soon.
The C-16 is being released by Broadway Limited with or with out decoders and both DC and DCC versions have sound.
The K27 and the Shay Kit are being released by "Mountain Model Imports" (AKA PSC). You can check out the new releases at the following web sites
http://www.caboosehobbies.com/brass/brasspg.htm
http://www.broadway-limited.com/

The Con-Cor long-a-waited HON3 and HO Goose has arrived and should be in your local hobby shop or model train store very soon. These are excellent models and they run very well right out of the box. Con-Cor has done a good job with this model. I have the HO version that I ran on my DCC layout with out a decoder. All the lights, 3in front and 1 backup light, worked perfectly. The motor makes very little or no noise as it runs. The wheels are spoked and even the drive truck has a chain which you have to look at real carefully to determine if it is actually turning, unfortunately it does not…Excellent model, which Con-Cor is out of stock at present but expects to have them in December 2003.

ATHEARN GENESIS: HO scale
ATHEARN will release an F7 B Unit for the SP Black Widow in the near future. Check the ATHEARN web site www.athearn.com

ATHEARN GENESIS: HO scale

UP SD70M Building America Flag & Wings Units
ATSF F7 B passenger unit "no number" (War Bonnet paint scheme)

BNSF ORANGE HERITAGE PREMIUM SD75M (fully assembled) available now
SD70 MAC due out soon check the ATHEARN web site www.athearn.com

ATHEARN RTR:
ATSF GP60M AND GP60B RTR UNITS/War Bonnet and Heritage II paint scheme
ATSF CF7 Pinstripe-round cab/War Bonnet-round cab/War Bonnet angle cab due soon.

LIFE-LIKE PROTO 2000 (P2K)
GP 60 due in June
ALCO S1 SWITCHER due in July

STEWART:
MKT S-12 Switcher two paint schemes

ATLAS:
NUMEROUS ROAD NAMES
H15-44 & H16-44

ATLAS: N SCALE:
VO-1000 NUMEROUS ROAD NAMES: Available

INTERMOUNTAIN RAILWAY COMPANY:
N SCALE: FT locomotives A/B sets, numerous road names.

MICROTRAINS:
N SCALE: FT locomotives A/B sets, numerous road names.

BACHMANN: SPECTRUM SERIES
HO, ON30
Bachmann's release of the HO/On30 scale Climax locomotives in late 2003 has been pushed back in to early 2004.

BACHMANN ON30:
ON30 SHAY Available
WOOD SIDE DUMP CAR: Soon to be re-released
V-DUMP CAR Soon to be re-released

BROADWAY LIMITTED:
Check the BWL web site for the new Release dates for their locomotives. Most of the released dates have been pushed back into 2004. Also check the web site for the scheduled "price increase" scheduled for October 2003.

BWLT NUMEROUS ROAD NAMES HO scale
N&W Class A 2-6-6-4 has been released, check your local hobby shop for prices/availability.
Mikado 2-8-2 Heavy
EMD E7A
EMD NW2/SW7

There are too many "new" models to list them all, so a trip to your local "Train Store" or favorite "Hobby Shop" should be on your list of important things to do. Take a friend with you to the Hobby Shop, young or old, the trip could produce a new model railroader with which you can share this great hobby. So long for now, until next time.

Carl

Narrow Gauge Excursion to Colorado

By Tracy Mitchell

Here I go again, writing about one of my many treks to Colorado. This time it wasn't my brother along for the ride, but Chuck Lind or should I say I was along for the ride.. Chuck drove his new truck (the Queen Mary II). He bought a Dodge with 4 full doors and an eight foot bed. We had 10 great days in the high country

On Day 1, I headed up to College Station to leave from there. Chuck was packed and waiting on me to get up there. After I packed my stuff, we were off to Colorado. We wanted to get as far as possible the first day. We headed up Highway 6 through Waco and Abilene. At Abilene we turned West and got into Sweetwater the last big town before night was upon us.

The next day we got up and were rolling by first light. From Sweetwater we headed for Lubbock. After Lubbock we turned West and headed for Clovis to watch BNSF parade of trains. We were not disappointed either. We saw 18 trains between Clovis and Vaughn. We continued to follow BNSF trains until Encino. We stopped at Clines Corners. For those of you who have never been to Clines Corners it is the biggest tourist trap in the Southwest. They have a motel, 2 gas stations, a restaurant, and the biggest gift shop or should I say several. They also have high gas prices because they are out in the middle of nowhere. We paid 1. 99 for a gallon. After Clines Corners it was off to Santa Fe and on to Mecca or for you non-narrow gaugers, Chama. We got into Chama in the afternoon and found the last room located in Chama. We also found that the only train running derailed. The engine was on the ground and they cancelled the train on Sunday. It looked like Tuesdays run was also in jeopardy. The Cumbres and Toltec, due to the previous owner, had only 1 locomotive able to run. This year they run a train from Chama to Antonito. The next day they run the train from Antonito back to Chama. They rest a day and repeat the sequence again. After looking at the yard and the progress the friends are doing repairing the rolling stock we found out where and why the train derailed. Saturday they had bad rain storm. The engineer saw a washout and threw the locomotive into emergency but it was to late. The engine was washed off the tracks about 18 inches. The good news was the engine remained upright and location was fairly accessible.

We got up Sunday morning and went looking for it. We discovered the derailment close to the Los Pinos tank. The problem was it wasn't as accesible as we thought. We could only get within a half mile on a very muddy dirt road and a locked gate. So we set up tripod and a telephoto to get shots of it. We made plans to chase the train on Sunday. Those went out the window. So we decided to head up to the quiet mining town of Creede. From Chama we worked our way North to Alamosa then headed West thru the farming area of Colorado. This area is noted for potatoes. After looking at the old buildings in Monte Vista and Del Norte we came upon the town of South Fork. This town has one of the few Std Ga water tanks still standing. We found it and much to our surprise there were locomotives and rolling stock beside it. There was an SP U boat, a Ge 44 tonner, passenger cars, and freight cars. After taking photos we continued on to Creede. At one time Creede was NG but it was converted to standard gauge fairly early on around 1920. At Wagon Wheel Gap, the depot is now a residence, but it to had rolling stock in front of it. Only this time they were NG.

Also the track that a few years ago was in bad shape looked like it could run trains again. (We found out at the NG convention they plan on opening a tourist line to Creede). The problem is the town of Creede likes things the way it is and plan on blocking the tourist line into town.

Chuck had never been to Creede and he was surprised at how the town still retained its old charm. Creede was one of the rougher mining towns. Bat Masterson was here, as well as Bob Ford and Calamity Jane. Creede was also one of the last areas to have "Gold Fever" so many of the mines are well preserved. After looking at the old town we headed up the box canyon to where the mines were located. Creede has the largest cribbing wall I have ever seen and it is a real treat to still see it intact. This thing must be 40 feet tall and about 100 feet long. We looked at it and decided to head up the canyon on the small dirt road. After a bit it started getting rougher and Chuck decided to turn around because he had his log camp display with us. He was planning on entering it in the contest. After we found what we thought was a wide spot in the road we decided to turn around. Chuck's new truck is larger than we anticipated and we only had 6 inches to turn around. That is with the rear wheels touching the edge and his bed hanging over a 200 foot cliff. After about 10 minutes we finally got the thing turned around. From that point on Chuck said "Don't ever take me on a dirt road like that again!" After we turned, around we headed back to Alamosa for the night.

Monday morning we got up and looked at the #169, a T12 (4-6-0), that is being refurbished. The tender is not with the engine, so they are well on their way of overhauling it. We chose the quick way to Canon City that was East on Hwy 160 to Walsenburg, then to I 25. At Pueblo we turned East on Hwy 50 to Florence. There we caught the Phantom Canyon Road. This is the old RR grade of the Florence and Cripple Creek. You go through two tunnels and across a couple of original RR bridges. If you haven't done this it is well worth the drive. Nice geologic formations and scenery abound on this road. This road ends up in Victor. Victor is one of Colorado's treasures. Many people haven't discovered it yet even though small time gambling is in nearby Cripple Creek. There are still miners' cabins and old false front buildings. After rummaging around in Victor we headed to Cripple Creek only to pass through. We were heading to Fairplay and would like to get there by nightfall. We passed through the South Park, one of the prettiest and largest valleys in Colorado. Looking at the valley it was easy to see why the DSP&P chose this as there way through the mountains. We managed to get to Fairplay and found the best restaurant on the whole trip. It was crowded and we got the only seats available at the counter. It was a 2-woman operation, 1 waiting and 1 cooking. The service was fast and portions were huge. I ordered a chicken fried steak that was the size of a football and 2 inches thick.

Continued on page 18

Toronto Remembered

By Jerry Schoenberg

What a hobby! Realizing that I still have great memories of the National Convention three months after the occurrence, I would like to pass on my thoughts to both those that attended and those that couldn't. It was rewarding to see the fine turnout from the Lone Star Region. Once again, by attending the Toronto, Canada Maple Leaf 2003 NMRA Convention, I was over whelmed with the great hobby we all share. The convention was a facility to teach, share, further friendships, and, yes, even brag a little.

The convention hotel was well laid out with registration, clinics, tours, food facilities and the company store easy to find. Several adequate outside restaurants were within a block or so of the hotel. And, the US $ exchange rate was very pleasing on most purchases. There were many rail and non-rail events offered including contests and auctions. I found the wonder of nature at Niagra Falls to be a great tour. We viewed the spectacle from under, over, and within the Falls. Lunch overlooking the Falls was a nice touch. An evening walk along the Toronto lakefront is still easy to remember, and the dinner cruise out on Lake Ontario offered many beautiful sights. I also enjoyed the York-Durham Heritage Railway Tour. It provided a true feel of past country train life in Canada.

The layout tours offered a great variety of home and club pikes. Yes, we had a bus breakdown with a flat tire. Luckily, we were only 3 blocks from the first layout. The layout owner's wife soon arrived to give a ride to those unable to walk the distance, and the bus was ready to continue when we were. Layout tours are, themselves , a wonder of the hobby. Strangers from all over the world are welcomed in private homes to sign the guest book. They, in turn, are able to view trains in operation, see the owner's scenery, ask questions, and usually receive cookies and beverages along with a "thank you" for coming.

The clinics presented were a real treat, and there was something for everyone. Because of the Toronto location, the variety of the clinics had not been offered at recent NMRA functions. Frequent comments from both friends and strangers directed me to attend the 2nd session of clinics that provided great notes for further endeavors. More than ever, I feel the clinics in Toronto did a good job of providing a look at future availabilities of products, uses for past products and a learning experience.

A highlight for me at Toronto was the operating sessions. Again, what other hobby makes a personal invitation to enjoy the investments of others! This, followed with a "thank you for coming and have some refreshments", makes me feel guilty, but, more importantly, creates a desire to give back to the NMRA. Bill Jewett and the Operations SIG group are to be commended for their efforts. The training layout at the convention was very well attended and worthwhile. A memory that is hard to forget occurred when we were short of transportation vehicles for one operating session. Without even thinking, Bill said, "Whatever it takes, here are the keys to my car. It is located at———". This was the session where an eighteen car, doubled-headed, steam, O scale, all brass passenger train went across a 9 ft. suspension bridge, and I was operating it. Sessions at Guelph Model Railroad Society and the Model Railroad Club of Toronto will be with me for a long time.

Last, but not least, was the Toronto Train Show. Faced with a late decision to cancel the National Train Show, the Toronto committee said "no worry". They borrowed manpower from several areas and proceeded to put on a show of their own. What a great job they did! There were non US vendors that offered newly seen items, great layouts, a company store and several "how to" booths for all to attend.

I hope this positive report will bring us all to Seattle in 2004 and offers an invitation for new member attendance.

Call for Candidates! Please!

I realize that we just finished one election but it is time to think about next years election. In 2004, the LSR will elect Division Directors for Divisions 2, 4, 6, 8 along with three (3) Directors At Large. If you wish to serve **your** Region, contact me for a biographical sheet or any other information you desire.

Please get on board early with your intent to allow your name to be placed on the ballot.

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Continued from page 16

Tuesday morning we were up early. We ate breakfast at the same place as the night before. Then we went to one of the best museums in the state. It is called South Park City. This is where they took several buildings from ghost towns in the area and restored them to back what they were. Like the drug store, it had all the snake oils and soda fountain bar in all its original glory. There is a general store, saloon, blacksmith shop, carpenter's shop and around 20 other buildings. Some of the buildings are at their original location while others were moved in from Alma, Leevick, and other ghost towns.. After viewing what South Park City and Fairplay had to offer we headed toward Georgetown via Hoosier Pass and the Eisenhower tunnel on I-70. We pulled into Georgetown, got a room, and went to look at the loop and the old buildings in Georgetown. Georgetown is noted for wonderful architecture on it buildings. Georgetown is probably the best town in America for viewing gingerbread on the houses. The town has 3 wonderful old hose houses (or as they are called today fire stations). We spent the afternoon touring the city and waiting for one of our friends to drive in from Las Vegas. He called around 4 that afternoon. We ate dinner at the Prague Cafe (a place that served Czech food). Judging by the accent of the owner, he hasn't been in this country to long. We made plans on how we were going to spend the next day before the convention offically started. One of Chuck's friends flew into Denver that night. We decided to have Chuck drive into Denver pick him up and drive back out to Georgetown so we could ride the Georgetown Loop RR with us. Then after we were done with the Loop we could either go to the Colorado RR museum in Golden or Caboose Hobbies.

That morning, when Chuck left for Denver to pick up his friend, the friend from Las Vegas and I walked Georgetown again to marvel at the buildings. We decided to ride the train from Silver Plume so we headed toward Silver Plum. That was where Chuck caught up with us. For anybody that hasnt ridden the Georgetown Loop, you really need to. For $18.00 You cant spend a better couple of hours. Even though the Shays weren't running they had their 2-8-0 fired up for us. This locomotive is from Central America and it was still a breathtaking trip. We got done riding the train just before the rains came. On the way into Denver it kept raining so we decided to go to Caboose Hobbies instead of the museum. Wise choice, when we got to Caboose, the shuttle bus that Caboose Hobbies runs between the convention and their store was already up and running. So we got in there to find the place packed with Model RRer's. two hours later we all got back into the vehicles with several bags of goodies, and a lot less cash. The next stop was the convention hotel, and the hotel we made reservations at.

At 7 the doors opened to the vending rooms. This is where the fun begins. Many of the manufacturers hold off introducing what is new until they get to the convention. This was no exception. Sierra West released the sawmill workings that CHB made which has been out-of-production for about 10 years. They also released the Mack Truck that CHB did. Western Scale Models came out with a vertical steam engine in HO, O and ½ inch scale. Precision Scale announced a K27 in On30 and On3 for $439, a bargain for us narrow gaugers.

Chuck and I gave the clinic on Long Leaf. We were the first one out of the shoot. Well us, and 7 other clinics going at once. Narrow gauge conventions are different than most other conventions. Since most of the manufacturers are modelers too, they have the morning devoted to entering models in the contest, vendor room open as well as clinics. In the afternoon the activities shut down completely at the convention This is then devoted to layout tours and other outside activities. The hotel stuff opens back again in the evening and goes till 10. The clinics that were available to see ran the gauntlet on topics. Here are just a few of the 66 clinics given. You could see a couple on scenery. They were given by Jon Addison, a professional layout builder, and Joel Bragdon, the rock mold guy. Harry Brunk, author of the "Up Clear Creek" series in the Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette Magazine came out of seclusion to give a clinic on what else, Up Clear Creek. Joe Crea talked about the Gilpin Tram, the only 2 ft gauge railroad in Colo. Mallory Hope Ferrell gave one on the South Park. Charlie Getz gave his clinic on freight car foibles. Miles Hale and John Lowrance did the cloud clinic, and as usual put on a good show. Lane Stewart, a professional photographer from Sports Illustrated, talked about digital photography. Robert Sloan did one on RGS and DRGW cabooses. He is the foremost authority on narrow gauge rolling stock. Anytime he speaks about rolling stock you can rest assured it is the gospel. Jim Vail did one on building stuff. I learned a lot of new techniques from him. Many you will be reading about in the coming months. Bill White did one on clutter. The key is not to throw anything away. Save everything including electric toothbrushes, printers, and watches to take apart. They are loaded with detail junk.

We didn't get to see all the layouts that were available. Out of the 25 layouts we saw 15 of them. All or most were exclusively narrow gauge. We got several modeling ideas from the ones we saw. We even saw an 1 ½ scale layout. Here is the listing of some of the layouts. We saw Marty McGuirk, an Sn3 layout that features the Chili Line of the thirties. Doug Geiger's large HO/HOn3 layout featured 550 ft of std gauge with an additional 100 ft of Ng. Bob Stull's On3/On2 layout featured wonderful handlay track work and the broad gauge was On3. We saw the Denver O scale club layout in Union Station basement. This is the room everyone could only dream of having. We saw Jim Powers layout . He models the C&S in On3 and has a small logging line. This was by far the best layout on the tour. We saw a G scale layout that didn't have a single bit of rock castings he used all natural rocks hot glued into place . It was very unique and really done well.

The contest room was by far the best we have seen in a number of years. There were 176 entries and all were done well. The best in show winner was a S scale working stamp mill. Yes, I said working. The stamps, belts, and everything else moved. It was by the best model I have seen in a long, long time. LSR member Kenneth Ehlers took home a first place and third place in photography. Jim Barron took second place in freight cars with his Baby Zoe car that was entered in the San Antonio LSR a couple of years ago.

The four days of the convention went by so fast. Before we knew it, we were heading home. Instead of repeating the same way home we went a different route. We went through Amarillo, and into Dallas. All-in-all we had a great time. We got buckets of decomposed granite but no Sage brush. The sage brush was still green in most spots and when we could cut some it was always raining. The Aspens were just starting to turn as we were leaving. As we pulled into Chuck's we were two tired travelers but our modeling batteries were recharged and we can't wait for next years narrow convention in the bay area.

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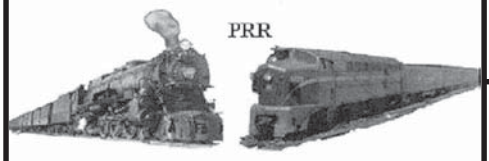

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